In Attendance:

Andrea Johnson, Mankato/Blue Earth County-EDA
Andrew Pietsch, Blue Earth County Human Services
Angela Early, Veterans Administration
Angela Knudson, South Central Human Relations Center
Ashley McCarthy, Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership
Bill Franken, Olmsted County
Carrie Erickson, ICA
Cindy Norgard, The Salvation Army, Rochester
Dina Chou, MN Department of Human Services
Irasema Hernandez, Semcac
Jane Lawrenz, MN Department of Human Services (HMIS Governing Board)
Janie Holliday, Center City Housing
Jen Thenenman, Partners for Affordable Housing
Jennifer Cook, Red Wing HRA
Julie Anderson, Steele County Transitional Housing
Kara Hoel-Kleese, Women’s Shelter
Kate Hengy-Gretz, Minnesota Valley Action Council
Liz Young, Hearth Connection
Mary Vrieze, Southern MN Regional Legal Services
Meghan Sawicki, Ruth’s House
Meredith Stolte, Northfield Union of Youth
Michele Merxbauer, Olmsted County HRA
Nancy Bokelmann, Mankato/Blue Earth County-EDA
Nathaniel Saltz, Minnesota Assistance Council for Vets
Nichelle Shannon, Community Representative
Nicollette Meyer, Family Promise Rochester
Randi Callahan, Three Rivers Community Action
Ruth Lee, MN Prairie County Alliance
Sheila Alba, Project Home HRC
Sheryl Block, Zumbro Valley Health Center
Sue Worlds, Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans
Sybil Betsinger, Community Action Center of Northfield
Trent Fluegel, Olmsted County
Victoria Heun, The Salvation Army, Mankato
Warren Duncan, Hearth Connection
Wes Brandenburger, Center City Housing

Facilitator: Nancy Bokelmann, Mankato/Blue Earth County-EDA
CoC Staff: Jennifer Prins, Katherine Cross
Recorder: Michelle Loken, Three Rivers Community Action, Inc.
Welcome, Introductions, and Announcements: Carrie Erickson had an announcement for HMIS – you can now reset your own password. Woo-hoo!!!

Jennifer Prins said the CES Navigator position at Three Rivers has been re-posted and they are in the application and interview process. If you know of any interested candidates, please direct them to the website.

Sue Worlds from Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans announced two upcoming events. They have planned a Veteran’s Stand Down at Rochesterfest, on June 27th. There will be a beanbag toss, raffle, and prizes at the Cornhole for Heroes fundraiser at the Mankato Brewery on June 29th.

Approval of May Minutes & June Agenda: Megan Sawicki motioned to approve the minutes and agenda. Michele Merxbauer seconded. The motion was carried.

CoC Policy Changes:
Governance Charter – revisions, hold vote for July 18th meeting: Jennifer Prins highlighted a few changes that are being made to the Governance Charter. CoC staff and Navigators are non-voting members. The Membership Agreement, Code of Conduct, and Rules of Engagement will be combined into one document, so it will be easier to manage. Voting privileges for at-large members, (which includes people that have experienced homelessness and other community members) need to be considered. It was recommended that community members will be expected to attend fifty percent of the meetings in order to vote and homeless/formerly homeless reps (who may have some barriers to attending meetings) be expected to attend thirty-three percent of the meetings in order to vote. The agency agreements will identify that a certain person is being designated to represent your organization and attend the meetings. Please direct any comments or questions about the proposed changes to Jennifer Prins. A vote will be requested at the July meeting.

Grievance Policy – revisions, first presentation to membership (no vote): The Grievance Policy has been completely rewritten. A participant grievance is anything a participant considers unfair. If a household/participant has a grievance, there should be a conversation and an attempt to resolve it at the agency level first. If the participant is still unsatisfied, there will be a formal approach to the process. A form will need to be completed by the participant. Grievance forms will be available on the website and in paper form. The form will be delivered to the lead agency to substantiate the claim and direct the claim to the proper committee. A written response will be provided within twenty days. If, at that point, there still is not a resolution, the grievance will be directed to the appropriate funding body. If a grievance is against the CoC lead agency, it should go to the CoC Co-Chairs.

There is also an agency grievance process. Our goal is to work together, but we also need to hold each other accountable. If another partner within our work is doing something incorrectly, there needs to be a conversation first. If it cannot be resolved, a formal grievance should be filed. Specific items that warrant a grievance are as follows: breach of CoC policies, denial of right to participate, conflict of interest, breach of regulation of a funding program, and technical errors. The formal grievance policy for agencies will be the same as stated above. Mary Vrieze commented that the Project Review Committee will have its own appeal process.

CoC Staffing and Procedures Update: Due to the shift in duties between Katherine Cross and Jennifer Prins, they have created a contact sheet which clarifies who the appropriate person is to direct questions to. The list will be posted on the website. Questions related to Coordinated Entry operations should go to Katherine. Anything regarding policy or that isn’t specific to Coordinated Operations should be directed to Jennifer.

HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) Governing Board Update and Feedback (Jane Lawrenz): Jane Lawrenz gave an overview of HMIS. The goal of this computer system is to help
agencies provide services to Minnesotans who have unstable housing. Agencies that use HMIS will gain improved case management, connect with housing referrals, evaluate how programs can meet the needs of their clients, apply for funding, and find information on policy changes.

Safe Harbor Grant Information Presentation (Dina Chou): Dina Chou shared information about the Safe Harbor Shelter funding. This program specifically serves youth ages twenty-four and under that have experienced sexual exploitation or sex trafficking. The Department of Health and the Department of Human Services have created a network of services across the state to identify, respond appropriately, and provide services to youth that have had these experiences. Dina is getting the word out about the RFP (Request for Proposals) grant that will be released this fall. Currently, there is not a Safe Harbor Shelter in southern Minnesota. Dina encouraged the CoC committee to think about possible ways this grant could benefit our region. Funding can be used for Safe Harbor housing, staff, and supportive services, but it cannot be used for capital.

Veterans Services Coordination (Nathaniel Saltz and others): Functional Zero is a standard that any veteran that is homeless is identified and housed as rapidly as possible. The Veterans Registry and the Coordinated Entry system tracks veterans that are experiencing homelessness, and connects them with housing availability and supportive services. It is important that a vet be on the Veteran Registry and the Coordinated Entry system to ensure access to all of the housing opportunities they are eligible for. Currently, there are 213 vets in Minnesota that are homeless. Six are in the southeastern region. Governor Walz has made it his primary goal to end veteran homelessness in our state. His projected date was Veteran’s Day 2019, but due to lack of funding, that is not going to be attainable. They are asking for vouchers in order to get the job done.

MN Coalition for the Homeless Discussion (Matt Traynor): Matt Traynor was unable to attend this meeting. Kate Hengy-Gretz announced that she volunteered to be in charge of scholarships for people with lived experiences to attend the MN Coalition for the Homeless Conference. The conference will be held September 17th and 18th in Rochester, MN. The scholarship would cover the cost of the conference and hotel. Vouchers for meals will be available. Transportation will not be covered. There are enough funds for thirty scholarships.

LTHSSF (Long-Term Supportive Services Fund) Grant Proposal Discussion (Liz Young): Hearth Connection is serving as an intermediary for funding for LTHSSF in the region. Their goal is to administer the southern regional project to end long-term homelessness, which provides supportive services for long-term homeless singles, youth, families, and veterans. The goal is to get people housed and stay housed. The services can stay with the person as long as necessary. Some people need that type of intensive services in order to stay housed. Hearth Connection will strive to support provider agencies and the CoC to optimize the Coordinated Entry System.

Hold Time for Workgroup Check In/Veterans Declarations: The Veterans Declaration did not happen today due to Governor Walz not being able to attend the meeting. If your workgroup is not making progress, now is the time to start assigning tasks, and setting up more specific timelines. The next NOFA (Notice of Funding Availability) period is coming up within a month and next steps will be needed. Andrew Pietsch stated GRH (Group Residential Housing) group has made some good headway on compiling a general guide. They would like to see broader implementation of housing support. The shelter group is still working on creating a large idea and would like to narrow it down before they decide which direction to go.

Kate Hengy-Gretz motioned to adjourn the meeting. Michele Merxbauer seconded. The motion was carried.

Next CoC meeting: July 18th, at 9:30, at Minnesota Valley Action Council (706 N Victory Drive, Mankato, MN)